



2015 DAKAR

Michelin Total Performance on the 2015 Dakar

The trail of the 2015 Dakar through Argentina, Chile and Bolivia saw Michelin make a real contribution to the success of its partners thanks to the high level of safety, performance, versatility and strength delivered by its tyres. They proved a match for the punishing annual event which, as ever, was no stroll in the park. Indeed, only 216 of the original 420 vehicles which started the competition made it to the end of the 9,000km adventure which, as usual, put competitors to the toughest of tests. However, despite the customary cocktail of high-speed action, intense heat and tracks where traction is constantly at a premium, Michelin's tyres came through the ordeal on top once again. While the MICHELIN Latitude C – the choice of the majority of the Car runners – is a familiar sight on the South American rally, the latest MICHELIN D15 designed for the new Peugeot 2008 DKR enjoyed a successful debut outing. On two wheels, the combination of the MICHELIN Desert Race and the MICHELIN Bibmousse insert proved once again to be the solution to beat. These tyres are available for all customers at Michelin distributors, as is the MICHELIN XZL+ which equipped the Truck class-winning Kamaz.

Cars: A clean sweep of the podium for the MICHELIN Latitude C, while the new MICHELIN D15 shone on its debut Dakar

The MICHELIN Latitude C, the tyre used by the Mini All4 Racings and Toyota Hiluxes on the 2015 Dakar, not only topped the final leaderboard but also claimed the top three places once more. Nasser Al-Attiyah and his co-driver Matthieu Baumel (Qatar Rally Team-Mini) completed the distance with a 35-minute cushion over De Villiers/Von Zitzewitz (Toyota Imperial Team South Africa) after emerging in front at the very beginning of the rally before controlling their lead. The Qatari made full use of his skill and cross-country rally experience to make the most of his competitive and reliable Mini, as well as of his MICHELIN Latitude C tyres which delivered a faultless combination of performance and strength. It is Al-Attiyah's second Dakar victory after that obtained in 2011 driving a BFGoodrich-equipped Volkswagen buggy. The third man on the podium was Krzysztof Holowczyc (Monster Energy Rally Raid Team), ahead of Dutchman Erik van Loon (XDakar-Mini) and Vladimir Vasilyev (G-Energy Team-Mini) who made it four Mini All4 Racings in the final top five.

It was another top result for the Sven Quandt-led squad which this year faced a new rival in Peugeot Sport which was back on the event after a 15-year absence. To equip Team Peugeot Total's new Peugeot 2008 DKRs, Michelin developed a new, specific, large tyre, namely the MICHELIN D15 (37/12.5-17). The best-placed Peugeot 2008 DKR, shared by Stéphane Peterhansel and Jean-Paul Cottret, had to settle for 11th place at the finish but the event harvested valuable data for the French make and its tyre partner. Thanks to the new car's reliability, the team's engineers and Michelin Motorsport's development experts were able to amass a vast amount of information which will help them to prepare for the 2016 Dakar.

Indeed, one of Michelin Motorsport's key strengths is its capacity to work closely with partners with very different demands thanks to the development of specially adapted solutions. The extreme nature of the Dakar continues to make it a valuable source of technical experience which the French tyre manufacturer subsequently dials into new tyres that are even more competitive, versatile and robust.



Bikes: Another assertive performance from the MICHELIN Desert Race combined with MICHELIN Bibmousse inserts

Spaniard Marc Coma steered his KTM 450 Replica (Red Bull KTM Factory Team) equipped with MICHELIN Desert Race tyres and MICHELIN Bibmousse run-flat inserts to a fifth personal Dakar triumph. With his former arch-rival Cyril Despres now competing on four wheels as part of Peugeot Sport's squad, Coma used his experience and talent to finish ahead of Portugal's Paulo Goncalves (Honda CRF 450 Rally-Team HRC). The Spaniard made a cautious start as the early pacesetter Joan Barreda (Honda CRF 450 Rally-Team HRC) pulled out a useful gap at the front of the field. He inherited first place, however, when the latter hit trouble crossing the Uyuni salt flat and had to be towed to the end of Stage 8 by his team-mate Jeremias Israel Esquerre.

Despite late pressure from Goncalves, Coma concluded the rally almost 17 minutes clear of the factory Honda rider. The pair was joined on the podium by Australian Toby Price whose KTM 450 Replica was also on Michelin rubber.

The French tyres produced yet another dominant display in the event's notoriously extreme and varied conditions, despite the intensity of Coma's fights with Barreda and Goncalves (see final classification).

Trucks... MICHELIN XZL+: the Tsar of Dakar

The MICHELIN XZL+ was given another intensive course in Russian in association with the truck manufacturer Kamaz (KAMAZ Master Team), a long-time partner of the French tyre manufacturer which monopolised the podium at the Buenos Aires finish. Mardeev/Belyaev/Svistunov (N°507 Kamaz 4326) claimed their first Dakar victory, ahead of Nicolaev/Yakovlev/Akhmadeev (N°502 Kamaz 4326) and the 2014 winners Karginov/Mokeev/Leonov (N°500 Kamaz 43269). It was an unprecedented triumph for the Michelin-equipped Tatarstan-made machines.

The Kamazes put their MICHELIN XZL+ tyres to an extreme test on the South American marathon which is hardly what the French products were designed for. Yet they soaked up the punishment to provide everyday truckers with an eloquent illustration of the strength of their casing and tread. It is this strength which allows the MICHELIN XZL+ to be run with low pressures in order to provide the necessary traction to keep moving forward on sand and soft ground, a definite advantage on the Dakar, as well as in the hostile conditions they face on a daily basis across the planet.

For information, MICHELIN has been active in South America since 1913:

- *Headquarters: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*
- *Total staff: more than 6,000*
- *Investment: €1 billion between 2006 and 2012*
- *Brands marketed: Michelin, BFGoodrich, Uniroyal, Montana, Kléber and Tigar*
- *Three production plants in Brazil*
- *Six sales offices: Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela*
- *MICHELIN: number one in Brazil and South America for radial truck tyres*
- *MICHELIN: number one in Brazil and South America for radial earthmoving plant tyres*
- *Michelin Refill Service: truck remoulds*